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DEPICTION OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY FRAGMENTARY SOCIETY  
IN W. FAULKNER'S *AS I LAY DYING*

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*William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying is a masterpiece novel of the fragmentation in mood, mind, and action where the writer explores and investigates the different themes of existentialism, paradox, alienation, and miscommunication – all were lively active in the 20th century. Faulkner applies the stream of consciousness technique, interior monologue, and multiplicity of point of view to show the real like image of the South American multicultural society in the frame of present unreasonable, mental apathetic states, and self-destructive devalues of the generation throughout the novel. The whole action is in the form of a 'death' journey: real external one and mental inner another.*

**Keywords:** *existentialism, paradox, alienation, miscommunication, stream of consciousness, interior monologue, the American South.*

**Introduction.** William Faulkner, an American novelist, a short story writer, a poet, and a screenwriter, has greatest influence on most modernist authors. His subjects range from childhood, families, sex, race, obsessions, time, his native south, and the modern man. His technical mastery is evaluated in terms of his narrative technique, of his meticulous planning of his novels, and of his sedulous experimentation with point of view. It is through their radical stylistic innovations and moral depth that his moral works achieve a universality, which places him among the major figures of world literature.

Faulkner is, after all, an original storyteller who has revolted against the traditional rules of fiction. In each of the novels he has published between 1926 and 1936, it seems as though fiction is reinvented. Encouraged by Sherwood Anderson to write about his Mississippi home, Faulkner has created the imaginary Yoknapatawpha, a country that has become the stage for his view of the human existence. In his novel *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner has successfully shown the absurdity of human life, his yearning for the past, and his identification with the South. J.-P. Sartre affirms that "Faulkner's metaphysics is a metaphysics of time" [1, p. 87]. Whereas for Faulkner the future is closed, and his heroes never look ahead, Sartre believes that a closed future, however, is still a future. This is why he does not believe in Faulkner's metaphysics [1, p. 93].

Yet Faulkner's obsession with time is attributed to the idealization of the past, and the fragmentation of the human existence. Furthermore, he excavates the collective unconscious of the revealed history in order to teach the matrix of the human condition. In his work we see that the present is submerged in the past. Jean Pouillon argues, in his *Temps et Roman*, that the memory cannot possibly be anything but the sense of the past and this lies at the core of Faulkner. Pouillon compares Proust's and Faulkner's past and concludes that for Proust the past is also as for Faulkner a present reality, but the difference, is that with Proust it is strictly individual while with Faulkner it is everybody's past [2, p. 80-82]. All of his major works are, indeed, embodiment of the past, which is so precious and so unique with Faulkner. According to J.-P. Sartre, Faulkner perceives life as fragmented and absurd, "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" [1, p. 92]. This is why Faulkner has never paid attention to the Future, rather he has insisted a depicting the past as it is.

Moreover, Faulkner has identified himself with the South, which becomes the region where all his stories take place. Yet Faulkner's treatment of the South is complex. As Walter Allen argues in his book *The Modern Novel in Britain and the United States*, his fiction is rooted in the folk memory [3, p. 115]. In the imaginative discovery of the Yoknapatawpha country, Faulkner has been obliged to create his fictional world, a paradigm existing beyond the established categories [4, p. 201]. Faulkner's South is, no doubt, extraordinary, rich and distinguished as one can see in *As I Lay Dying*. In his book, *The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South*, Richard Gray asserts that the reason why the story of Yoknapatawpha is such a convincing imitation of the story of the South, is that it "does not have a predetermined, linear pattern" [4, p. 205]. In other words, Faulkner is trying to create a history reenacting the past, and thus the event is engaged with the memory. The South, hence, is very realistic though idealized and sublimated. And since Faulkner addresses the South, all his South, he becomes a regional writer and not a provincial one.

To depict the influence of the milieu on the artistic temperament of Faulkner, it is essential to examine the critical views on the Yoknapatawpha County. The South is the background of Faulkner's work, and the Yoknapatawpha County – his fictional south – where he is the "sole owner and proprietor", as the author

inscribed on one of the maps he drew [5, p. 9]. Most critics agree on the intimate relation between the southern region and the artistic temperament of Faulkner, who, himself, admits the discovery of his homeland.

Faulkner's works seek to understand the past rather than reach into the future. Faulkner excavates the collective unconscious of the revealed history in order to reach the matrix of the human condition. The southern myth becomes the voicing of the collective imagination. History is not an objective datum, it is rather a myth. Nicolas Berdyaev, a Russian philosopher, argues that each man's memory is a microcosm that amalgamates history and the whole world of reality, and that "each man contains within his inner nature a sort of microcosm in which the whole world of reality and all the great epochs combine and co-exist" [6, p. 17]. Berdyaev posits the individual's consciousness as a sensorial of historical knowledge and knowledge proves to be immortal. A myth contains the story that helps to bring to life some deep stratum buried in the depth of the human spirit. Thus, the significance of the part played by tradition in the comprehension of history makes possible a great act of remembrance. Tradition represents a manifestation of the inner mysteriousness of life in which one can attain to know and feel himself to be an inalienable participant. A nation's history comprises the knowledge of people where the human experience forms the matrix of reality. This inclination to the past is validated in the manners, morals, values, beliefs and traditions belonging to the Old South.

In *The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams*, Peggy Prenshaw regards the South as "a riddle", finding at its heart the "union of opposites and a condition of instability, a paradox". She points out the cultural paradox that shapes the literary imagination of Faulkner, of other southern writers, and even the imagination of their paradoxical characters. Prenshaw explains that the conflicting opposition in the Southern experience of "calm grace", raw hatred, polished manners and violence" and that "intense individualism and intense group pressures toward conformity" are at the heart of the southern psyche [7, p. 6]. Furthermore, she analyzes the impact of the environment on the artist through his characters' yearning "for freedom from the past, from suffocating family responsibilities, old mistakes and corruptions, illusions, compromises, mendacity" [7, p. 7]. Thus, the conflict of these protagonists resides not only in their knowing the irony of southern history, but also in their knowledge of the inescapable consequence of being human. But to resist fate and to refuse the responsibility for the human condition is regarded by Faulkner as "fatal and self-defeating". Faulkner's characters are built on paradoxes which consistently appear in the "effect of the past on the present, the consequence of human sexuality and the mortality that attaches to the flesh and to tradition alike" [7, p. 7]. In their compelling pathos, characters suffering from such tensions resemble the birds in Wallace Stevens' poem *Sunday Morning* in making "ambiguous undulations as they sink / Downward to darkness, on extended wings" [7, p. 15].

The southern family can be understood in its socio-historical context. The modern southerner cannot escape the fact that he is a participant in the region's post war society. However, being burdened by "the dehumanized south of the mercantile Snopses, the southerner turns inward toward his family" [8, p. 43]. This introversion is the ultimate means of self-protection in a world that is alien and incomprehensible to him. Thus the frustration guilt, ambivalence and rejection that the southerner must feel – all these translate themselves into the familial level and reproduce themselves in the marital and parent-child exchange, as well as in incestuous relationships. Faulkner asserts the role of the milieu on his private artistic vision, the last being a present consequence of the southern people's inability to liberate themselves from the past, by admitting that "I've taken the artist in one hand and the milieu in the order and thrust the one into the other like a clawing cat into a sack" [8, p. 61]. Being a southern artist, he activated his artistic temperament by structuring his Yoknapatawpha on the antagonism inherent in the human condition which includes man's position in society at large.

The concept of the structure of feeling captures the discontinuities and uncertainties of the lived experience of historical transition, an experience not yet legible in material practice, existing structures of meaning, or established social identities and relationships. Just at the edge of semantic figuration, a structure of feeling is an effect that is rooted in transformations occurring on the level of material life, social organization, and ideology.

**Fragmentation in the Present.** *As I Lay Dying* presents the Bundren family as a fragmented and conflicted social group rife with misunderstanding, secrecy, and betrayal, and enhances the incomprehensibility of their experience by disrupting narrative coherence and linear chronology. The semantic and syntactic disorder serve to indicate the turmoil the Bundrens experience as they leave their habitual surroundings and struggle to adapt to changing pressures and limits.

By using the same tropes and techniques, Faulkner suggests with *As I Lay Dying*, however, if portions, as Sundquist has argued, offer a compassionate, unabashedly moving view of the Bundrens as they make their way from the countryside to Jefferson, other portions present them as an embarrassment, outrage, or threat. While acknowledging the heroism of their struggle as they move into difficult and unfamiliar spatial and social settings, it also emphasizes, through both the external viewpoints of non-Bundrens and the internalized viewpoints of the Bundrens themselves, that the Bundrens are pinned in the one-down position. While it may be, as Sundquist maintains, that comedy is a means of releasing pressure and relieving anguish, it does not relieve the unremitting anguish of the Bundrens but rather the anxiety of those bourgeois subjects whom their unseemly presence perturbs.

Despite its formal complexity, the underlying situation and narrative of *As I Lay Dying* is quite simple. Addie Bundren dies, leaving her husband and five children to fulfill her request that she be laid to rest forty miles away, in Jefferson, where her relatives are buried. Her request places a burden on her family, who subsist on limited means as small farmers and occasional wage laborers in rural Northern Mississippi in the late 1920-s. After a delay of three days, the family sets out in the heat of July with Addie's body in a mule-driven wagon and, as further delays extend the duration of the journey and Addie's body decomposes further, neighbors and onlookers become increasingly critical of the Bundrens. Not without suffering calamities, the Bundrens ultimately reach Jefferson, unceremoniously bury Addie and, after committing the elder son Darl to an insane asylum and replacing Addie with a new wife and mother – two unexpected and preposterous twists of the plot – return to the country.

The fragmentation and the absurdity of the human life necessitate, for Faulkner, a technique that corresponds with it. He has made of his artistic vision of the human condition an artistic choice in his works which though difficult to understand, yet proves to be an extraordinary art to describe our “suffocation and a world dying of old age” [1, p. 93]. Thus, he develops Joyce's technique of the stream of consciousness and his strategy of penetrating the individual mind. Moreover Faulkner modifies the Joycean and the Proustian methods by contributing to the art of the novel a new hitherto unknown narrative method, that of making of the point of view, the style, and the structure of his novels an intrinsically unified entity whose individual elements derive their power and significance from their mutual interdependence on the significance of one another.

The fragmentation of the human mind is a device used in *As I Lay Dying*. The private consciousness of each one of the Bundrens is dedicated to a specific section. In *As I Lay Dying*, the fifty-nine sections are distributed among fifteen characters and the closest possible harmony between the character's thoughts and the world they inhabit is given in fragments. *As I Lay Dying* serves as an adequate example of the employment of the stream of consciousness in the creation of each of the fifty-nine fragments that compose the novel. As we have already seen, the stream of consciousness is a common narrative technique in the modern novel, an attempt to convey all the contents of a character's mind—memories, sense perceptions, feelings, intuitions, thoughts – in relation to the stream of experience as it passes by, often at random [4, p. 197]. Here the reader can have an access to the memories of the characters, while they are providing him simultaneously with different perspectives of the family history through one series of events. Each section in the novel is devoted to one character presenting his memories through his personal voice. Through the blending of the soliloquy and interior monologue, Faulkner allows us admittance into the minds of the Bundrens in *As I Lay Dying*. In fact, each of the Bundrens performs the journey alone. Each human being isolated in his own consciousness, each corresponds to a fragment, a scene, or one part of a scene. This strategy of fragmentations allows the reader to perceive different ways of looking at the same event and to cultivate insight into the whole history of the Bundrens.

Darl's fragmentary thoughts correspond to his perception of the human condition. Born at the height of his mother's disillusionment with the world, he embodies her separation between words and deeds. In her only monologue, Addie, recollecting Darl's birth, admits to her sense of having been betrayed, a feeling that forced her to deny him her love. “Then I found I had Darl. Then I believed that I would kill Anse... And when Darl was born I asked Anse to promise to take me back to Jefferson when I died” [9, p. 173]. Gifted with the meticulous precision in recording the world around him, Darl proves to be the most complex of the characters in the novel. Unable to transform reality into unreality, he eventually goes mad. These facets have inspired Olga Vickery's conclusion that Darl's world is a world “of consciousness only, and this renders his connection with the external world insecure” [10, p. 244].

Similarly, the fragmentation of Dewey Dell's mind reveals her distorted thoughts about her secret conception. In her first monologue, she reflects on her pregnancy, shifting responsibility on to chance. Dewey Dell tricks Lefe into impregnating her and justifies her act by the notion that nature has defeated her. Instincts are given a chance to play in the primitive nature. The process of Dewey Dell's mind is rendered dramatic in terms of her encounter with Lefe: “We picked on down the row, the woods getting closer and closer and the secret shade picking on into the secret shade” [9, p. 27]. In a way, she combines word and action but regrets the consequence and seeks a suitable position to solve her problem. In another monologue, her language renders her in sharp contrast to Jewel. And, in Addie's mind, she is exchanged in negation to Jewel. Dewey Dell recreates “Addie's past and discovers that pregnancy is a state of mind and body, word and action” [10, p. 243]. Being an extension of Addie doesn't mean that she will declare her sexual encounter with Lefe. Instead, she wishes to confide in Peabody, but she retreats. She finally takes the journey to Jefferson hoping to obtain an abortion, but she fails. The only threat she feels is in Darl's intuitive knowledge of her pregnancy. To erase her fears from Darl's powers, she dreams of killing him: “I killed Dad” [9, p. 121]. She, at the end of the journey, succeeds in incarcerating him in an asylum, reminding us of Addie's rejection of him at the time of his birth.

**Stream of consciousness technique.** Faulkner reflects his vision of the human experience in his masterpiece *As I Lay Dying*. In this work, human feelings, inclinations and thoughts do not take place in chronological order. Because Faulkner believes that man's internal experience is fragmented, he attempts to represent it artistically in slices. There is nothing in the human mind that is kept away from experience or

perception or association of ideas. This shaping of the private subjective experience could be displayed in different perspectives within the stream of consciousness.

Stream of consciousness writers, major among them are Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Faulkner, attempt to artistically formulate the possibilities and processes of “the inner realization of truth” [11, p. 12]. This search for truth is a psychic activity in the deep level of consciousness, and Joyce’s, Woolf’s and Faulkner’s major works from the outstanding evidence of the importance of human awareness, archived through the characters’ experience of the free overflow of thoughts and feelings in their inner being.

Much of Faulkner’s greatness is, in fact, related to his skillful employment of the stream of consciousness technique. Robert Humphrey defines this technique in his book *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, as “a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on the exploration of the pre-speech levels of consciousness for the purpose... of revealing the psychic being of the characters” [11, p. 4]. This technique allows the writer to enter the mind of each character individually and reveals the conflict in their psyche. Such a technique Faulkner makes use of in *As I Lay Dying* aided sometimes by the third-person narration to provide an objective view about some characters through the point views of other characters.

Faulkner again manifests James Joyce’s influence on his writings. For in *As I Lay Dying*, the author almost “refined out of existence” [11, p. 15]. Joyce’s aim is to make the reader feel that he is in a direct contact with the life represented in the book. It is a method to present life as it actually is without prejudice or direct evaluations. In *As I Lay Dying* Faulkner remains away from the life of his characters and presents the journey of the Bundren with total objectivity. Though Alfred Kazin regards Faulkner’s work as the produce of some ineffable decadence and reluctant commentary upon it, he admits that because Faulkner’s technical energy and total suggestiveness are so profound, that it has been possible to read every point of view into his work and prove them all [12, p. 235-238]. The Bundrens are presented to us in a variety of mirrors. Voices join to tell us about their lives, and no one voice can be regarded as authoritative. Through their voices, each of the Bundrens ends to assume a multidimensional personality [4, p. 207].

In *As I Lay Dying*, Faulkner examines the technique with which he has to work with each character’s mind. The story is told in the stream of consciousness fashioned by fifteen different speakers. The same technique has been employed by James Joyce in *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*, for instance, in the passage made by Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* while she is lying in bed and she describes her husband lying asleep beside her. This passage can be compared to that made by Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying* recollecting her past memories about her husband Anse: “Sometimes I would be by him in the dark hearing the land that was now of my blood and flesh and I would think! Anse: why Anse...” [9, p. 173]. Thus the internal trip carried directly from the character’s mind is a Joycean strategy which Faulkner has reinvented in his work and we can see that a similar passage made by the alive Molly Bloom, comes from the confines of the coffin by the dead Addie Bundren.

The journey of the Bundren family to Jefferson carrying the dead body of Addie to be buried with her people at the Jefferson cemetery is such an agonizing journey. Each character lives within his own consciousness. The need to co-operate during the journey merely disguises the essential isolation of each of the Bundrens and postpones the essential conflict between them [10, p. 50]. Their relation to each other is fragmented and distorted; the reason why each of them lives within the confines of his memory unable to come out of his shell.

Each of the Bundrens is concerned with Addie’s death and her funeral. Their motivation lies within her life for she is the source of the tension. However, obsessed by their relationships to her, they can resolve the tension when they come in terms with what she signifies in their own consciousness [10, p. 52]. Nevertheless, the agonizing journey of the Bundrens can be viewed from different angles, for each of them, except for Darl and Jewel, has ulterior motives of that journey to Jefferson. Darl, alone, seems to have the ability to penetrate the minds of other characters and to intuit their secret thoughts. He apprehends the actions of Cash, Anse, and Dewey Dell as they cluster around the dying Addie [10, p. 59]. Darl knows that Jewel is the son of his mother’s sin, and he always asks: “Who was your father, Jewel?” [9, p. 213]. Moreover, he is aware of Dewey Dell’s pregnancy: “You want her to die so you can get to town: is that it?” [9, p. 40]. This sense of omniscience is largely due to the richness of his monologues.

Faulkner’s technique adheres to Joyce’s artistic innovations in exploring the function of memory and adds more significance to the remembered past. In this respect, Faulkner was influenced by Marcel Proust, author of *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*. Proust used memory as the main subject and as the center of his novel which is dependent both on the external world for its substance and on the mind for its final form [13, p. 26]. Memory is a process that operates on many levels in assimilating and reconstructing the present tense of the past. The act of recollection renders each character, in his search for the essence of truth, in complete subjectivity and isolation from the world. It is the subject matter where the mind of each character is dramatized by the conscious use of style and language as a medium of expression and by the employment of leitmotifs and scenic arrangements which help reveal the inner life of the mind.

**Interior monologue.** The indirect interior monologue, the omniscient description and the soliloquy are three basic techniques Faulkner used to develop those different perspectives. Thus, the interior monologue is instrumental in representing the psychic content and the process of association of ideas of the character. Such a representation, however, remains, on the unspoken level, a quality that makes for the difference between the interior monologue on the one hand and the dramatic monologue and soliloquy on the other. Each monologue reflects the subjective experience of each character and sheds light on other characters too. Thus, every monologue is a metaphor that corresponds to perception, while in every point of view resides the snap shot of the human condition.

The interior monologue orchestrates the tendencies and intentions of each character. The use of different subjective voices permits the possibility of perceiving the journey and provides insight into the whole history of the Bundrens. In *As I Lay Dying* the memories of the characters are limited but they reveal the human experience when these characters are exposed to promiscuity as in Dewey Dell's case, or to disintegration as in Darl's case or to the pressure of personal moral codes as in Addie's case. Faulkner disrupts the chronology of time where memory dictates the significance of an event. What characterizes *As I Lay Dying* is the process of the action that moves forward while all characters, isolated as they are in their private experiences, are preoccupied with their memories and the present actualities of the journey. The surface level of action deals with the last days, the death and the final journey of Addie, while the deep level of action projects promiscuity, perfidy, madness and viciousness of the mourning family – thus chronicling its disintegration.

Faulkner has consequently employed these concepts of the psychic content and the processes of the psyche in his work, especially in *As I Lay Dying*, the novel that serves as clear evidence of his artistic temperament and his conscious choice of artistic strategies, namely the interior monologue. The advantages of the interior monologue manifest themselves in the presentation of symbols as substitutes for rationally formulated ideas. The most important of these interior monologues is that made by Addie Bundren. Though dead from the beginning of the novel, Faulkner opts to resurrect Addie and gives the 40<sup>th</sup> chapter named for her. She begins her monologue remembering her tortured existence as a school teacher: "In the afternoon when school was out... I would go down the hell to the spring where I could be quit and hate them" [9, p. 169]. She recounts her initial contact with Anse and remembers him as being dead to her: "He did not know that he was dead" [9, p. 173]. Addie seems to be speaking from beyond the grave. It is, indeed, Faulkner's liberal attitude towards the sequential time and his strong emphasis on the stream of consciousness. Jumping from one consciousness to another, the reader's interest is sustained, therefore, throughout the novel.

All the characters in the novel are psychologically motivated, and though there is no direct dialogue between them, they are aware of the motifs of one another. However, their monologues are rather dramatic monologues. This is related to Faulkner's method of revealing the consciousness of his characters, which is that of sustaining the dramatic tension. Robert Humphrey defines the interior monologue as the "process of the character ... just as these processes exist at various level of conscious control..." [11, p. 24]. The dramatic monologue is a way in which the character addresses someone else, and this someone does not participate in any thing. The dramatic function of the dramatic monologue is that it reveals more about the speaker than the person spoken about. In addition to that, Faulkner uses soliloquy to depict the stream of consciousness. Soliloquy can be defined as the "technical representation of the psychic process of a character directly to reader without the author's intervention. The point of view is the character's and the level of consciousness is usually close to the surface" [11, p. 24].

**Multiplicity of points of view.** The multiplicity of points of view which Faulkner uses in works like *As I Lay Dying* is another successful contribution to the art of writing. By this method we, as readers, can formulate our opinions about the characters through their own point of view and through other characters' point of view. For instance in *As I Lay Dying* all the characters describe their feelings about the dead Addie Bundren and the journey of her burial at Jefferson. The most salient of these point of view is the one made by Addie herself, a sound coming from within the coffin to describe her past events and life among her family. Each point of view evaluates and objectifies other point of view. This method is conveyed through a brilliant and exuberant prose style that runs along with a colloquial language. Olga Vickery stresses that Faulkner is able to indicate the particular combination of sensation, reason, and intuition possessed by each of his characters as well as their range of awareness through a subtle manipulation of language and style [10, p. 51].

Faulkner has employed the technique of point of view. The multiplicity of subjective point of view is another artistic choice, a measure to achieve objectivity. In this case the authorial voice is excluded from the process of narration and the dominant voice is that of the character himself. This reminds us of Wayne Booth's *Objectivity in Fiction*, where he says: "Narrator' is usually taken to mean the "I" of a work, but the "I" is seldom if even identical with the implied image of the artist" [14, p. 73]. Thus, the writer of a book seems to enter each of his character's mind and at the same time what is read cannot be interpreted as his own words but those of the implied author. What Faulkner is after is to be objective by presenting their stories. Thus, he delivers the narration through a multiple of subjective points of view.

In his work, Faulkner has skillfully employed the technique of point of view where each one evaluates other points of view and thus the writer is impartial to his characters and does not take sides. The point of view

in both works is a measure to achieve the desired objectivity. Faulkner's novel is a story of voices or of the human mind. Each mind is in a complete isolation from the mind of other characters. Faulkner admits that there is a little drama going on in the mind of each character. The physical absence of each character from the life of another, functions to heighten the isolation and to sharpen the human will and the human determination of each character. Despite this isolation, each of the characters is haunted by the mind of other characters, a situation which we encounter with Darl in *As I Lay Dying*.

The use of multiple viewpoints uncovers the workings of the hearts and minds of the Bundrens, thus revealing their feelings about one another, their deep universalized thoughts as well as their trivial responses to the world. Jewel's point of view reveals his intense feelings for his mother and his jealous desire to protect her from the rest of the family. He wears the rigid and emotionless facade, but when the need for action arises, he acts. Jewel expresses his emotion in violence, attacking the man who objects to the smell of the corpse and leaping on Darl, shouting and threatening to kill him. Moreover, Cash's perception develops him as a sensitive observer of the world around him. He is concerned with the precision of his art – carpentry – as well as with the family relationships. He is aware of Jewel's dislike of Dad and of the latter's disturbed psyche. Cash's perspective shapes his sound observations. Instead of dwelling on the oddities and the grotesque features of his family, as Darl does, he modifies them by using his sense of balance and internal stability. He, alone, suspects that Anse is seeking a new wife before the lady herself appears. He also confirms that Darl's incarceration is the result of his family's unwillingness to pay for the damaged barn. Beneath the rural simplicity, the Bundrens are capable of unsuspected viciousness: Darl is their victim.

Darl's character is sketched according to his psychological motivations and responses to the world. In 19 monologues, he is presented as the most complex of the characters in *As I Lay Dying*. Poetic and sensitive, isolated and embodying an impossible dichotomy between words and deeds, he is the only Bundren who can evoke the full horror of life as his family leads the journey. The journey puts on him a greater strain than it does on the others precisely because he is more alive to the notion of possibilities and is consequently forced to confront the grotesque nature of the outside world, which he finally rejects as unreal and in which he doubts his own existence. The complex quality of Darl's un verbalized musings is so prevalent in the novel that it constitutes an alternative vision of events. In section six, Darl's vision transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary. A mind like Darl's is able to discard normal ways of looking at things and to perceive resemblances between them which a less sensitive observer would ignore. Darl's complex poetic imagery expresses his complex feelings. In section six, his words sum up his condition: "In a strange room beneath a strange roof .. thinking of home" [9, p. 80]. Everything in the world requires something in order to confirm its existence. Rain and wind have to give way when they encounter the solidity of the wagon, and in giving way they acknowledge its existence. Darl continues this touching meditation. He feels isolated and finds little in the world to confirm his existence: "Before you empty yourself for sleep, you are not" [9, p. 80]. Then he must exist because he is in the process of emptying himself for sleep. Darl's inclination towards self- definition delineates the loneliness he feels and the little he finds in the world to shape him, to confirm his own existence. Here Addie's deliberate withdrawal of her affection from Darl is epitomized. She has thrown him into void and has made him unsure of his own existence. The final line is pessimistic suggesting that Darl can look back on a life time of such meditations and that home with its overtones of comfort, security and belonging, has always eluded him. All roofs have seemed to him equally strange. Dan's character shapes him as an eccentric poet. His ability to perceive the world in various ways renders any scene vivid. In addition to this ability, he sees things which others miss. In section six, where we see Darl and Jewel, the latter is oblivious to the problem faced by the former and is incapable of helping to solve it. Darl's monologues are counterbalanced by the rest of the characters. He remains a precise observer and is always concerned with Jewel's acts. His attitude towards Jewel is a combination of spitefulness eloquent of jealousy and a perverted form of hero worship. In the poor and horrific world of the Bundrens, the tall straight figure of Jewel mounted on the spotted horse, stands out and has an aesthetic appeal which Darl can not resist. However, Darl's meticulous observation shows that his madness is born of being too sensitive in a situation rife with grotesque possibilities. When he gets to Mottstown, he ceases to believe in the solid existence of outside events. This disbelief is his method of coping with events which are becoming too horrible for him to bear.

The arrangement of the points of view provides a kind of a kaleidoscopic perception that accumulates to create the dramatic metaphor of the human condition. Olga Vickery notes that there are sixty sections in *As I Lay Dying* reflecting the points of view of fifteen characters. "Each describes either part of the funeral or the procession itself, even as it explores and defines the mind of the observer from whose point of view the action is described" [10, p. 233]. The omniscient narration corresponds to the commentary of the eight characters who appear in *As I Lay Dying* not as members of the Bundren family but as strangers who aren't directly involved in the journey. These eight strangers provide new views on the family. Also they create an impression of the cultural context within which the Bundrens were born. For instance, the town's people, as represented by Moseley and MacGowan, regard the Bundrens as a bizarre family. Moseley's unspoken thoughts reflect his view of the family as both grotesquely comic and a little tragic in their simplicity. Dewey Dell appears in sharp focus stumbling at the shop's door, her eyes blank and her voice incapable of expressing her wants. Moseley's assistant

considers the Bundren's Journey as an anomaly, a sharp contrast between the ways of the town and those of the country. Anse remains oblivious to the horrified reactions of the townspeople. He is concerned with telling them his story of how the putrescent corpse had reached Mottstown. In Peabody's section, we trace his unspoken thoughts about the time when he is brought to treat Cash. Peabody seems to have changed his mind about Anse. Formerly he regarded Anse as an unlucky man but later he considers him as someone who is criminally negligent to the welfare of his own family. Thus, this omniscience "provides another aspect of the funeral in which the Bundrens are not involved" [10, p. 233].

The operation of a variety of minds explores the deep levels of each idiosyncratic character. Each character is unraveled through the quality and content of each point of view. By discerning the process of the consciousness, the interrelationships among the family members are revealed. Also revealed are the ideas and views of the world in which the family lives or moves. In discerning the pattern of familial relationships one can explore the nature of human perception - the perception crucial not only to the human mind but also to the psychological motivation of each voice. Perception is seen as a mixture of response, memory and projection. Each of the fifteen characters that populate *As I Lay Dying* narrates his/her story through his/her subjective voice. As a matter of fact, no character tells a story in the conventional manner but rather each responds to the environment, to the people, and goes backwards in time through memories and forwards in time by projecting his/her subjective thoughts. The use of verisimilitude of viewpoints allows for the discrimination among the various modes of human perception, while on the other hand one can infer the discrepancies among the Bundrens' gallery of obsessed minds. The feelings, the mood of events and the texture of the lives which are lived out are all integrated into the vicissitude of viewpoints.

Darl's perceptive powers, for instance, render him a perspicacious person. He may be relied upon to reflect his motivations creating memorable images of those things which obsess him or formulating ideas about his existence. His point of view distinguishes him from Jewel or Vardaman or Dewey Dell. In his monologue related to the fire-scene, Darl reflects his jealousy of Jewel and his vehemence against Addie. Combining thought and action in a peculiar way, he sets the barn on fire to get rid of Addie's putrescent coffin. In his monologue, he describes the figure of Jewel against the dark doorway as similar to a "lean race horse" [9, p. 218]. Then, changing his style, he renders Jewel, in an expressionistic image, as someone who "runs silver in the moonlight, then he springs out like a flat figure cut leanly from tin against an explosion" [9, p. 218]. Jewel's actions, movements and gestures reflect his vitality and his psychological motivation to rescue Addie from fire and water – thus unknowingly executing her will.

Darl's motives for setting the barn on fire reflect the reciprocated hatred of Addie who deprived him of her motherly care. By combining the intention and the action, Darl seeks riddance of Addie and causes anxiety to her beloved son, Jewel. The hurt inflicted on Jewel's back is an extension of Dan's metaphysical anguish. Darl's observations are rendered in a cluster of images where Jewel and Gillespie become "two figures in a Greek frieze, isolated out of reality by the red glare" [9, p. 219]. Moreover, Darl's vision of the events lends them a touch of savage unreality which is in keeping with his personal lack of belief in reality. His vision and his observation show the contrast between the real forms and the formlessness of smoke and reality. His image of the barn is rendered in surrealistic terms: "The front the facade with the square orifice... like a Cubistic bug" [9, p. 218]. Despite Darl's rage, Jewel manages to save Addie from flood and fire.

Vardaman's point of view affiliates with Darl's. In fact, Vardaman is useful to Faulkner since as a child he can be made to record experience in a very direct way, unmodified by present patterns of thought or other filters. Vardaman's mind constructs analogies to what it perceives, perception being limited to "sensations". Vickery affirms that Vardaman's mind is not "able to pass from the concrete to the abstract" [10, p. 244]. He, for instance, cannot bear the reality that his mother has died so he tries to escape it through using the language of association. He identifies his mother with a fish ("My mother is a fish" [9, p. 67]) since the two experiences, the catching of the fish and his mother's death, happen so close together. These two events are mixed up in his mind and are revealed in his speech. In section 10, he associates the dead fish with his dead mother: "When the fish is cut, it is not a fish anymore". His mind is being occupied with the negation of life and so he uses "Fish-not fish, blood-not blood" [9, p. 45]. At the same time, he negates the sight of the coffin by not mentioning the word coffin: "When they get it finished they are going to put her in it... I couldn't say it" [9, p. 54]. The fact that he doesn't say the word "coffin" means that he couldn't cope with reality. It is difficult to say whether Vardaman's reaction to his mother's death is due to the sense of his mother's lack of affection for him, or simply to the trauma of losing her. But what is obvious is that he keeps transforming things in order to escape reality. Vardaman's resemblance to Darl becomes more pronounced when they reach the Gillespies. Their shared delusion suggests, Olga Vickery argues, "that for both of them the world of fantasy has become as real as the concrete facts which we call reality" [10, p. 241].

At the fire scene, Vardaman's monologue affiliates with Dad's. He comforts Darl that Addie is saved from fire. The limitations of his perception are of a different order. They are the dramatic exploitation of a young mind bewildered by death and fire. Vardaman perceives the mishap of his family. Cash's foot is black as

“a Niger” [9, p. 224] and Jewel’s back is like a Niger too. The images correspond to the infested decay of the Bundrens. However, he is attracted by the red of the barn, and remembers it as “swirling making the stars run backwards without falling” [9, p. 224]. This childish language is an expression of an aesthetic response.

**Conclusion.** Faulkner examines life without illusion by looking back into the past and utilizing the distant perspective. He tests the present by past and past by myth and myth by morality which has emerged from this process of exploration. This testing is basic to the novel in which this process of exploration is dramatized through incessant excavations of the deep roots of the southern family’s past, the family being the nucleus of human relations and the reflection of society at large. Faulkner’s technique which is shifting the point of view from one private consciousness to another evaluates the materials of the tragic disintegration of the Bundrens family. A certain dimension of objectivity is achieved in shifting the point of view from subjective perception to objective description of man’s actions and of life’s complexities.

This study shows that in the Yoknapatawpha novels, Faulkner placed himself in the forefront of the avant-garde with his intricate plot organization, his bold experiments in the dislocation of narrative time, and his use of the stream-of-consciousness technique. His stylistic view of time was affected by his sense that past events continue into the present. Starkly realistic, poignantly symbolic, grotesquely comic, and immensely complicated as an experiment in points of view, *As I Lay Dying* ranks with Faulkner’s greatest novels.

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#### ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЕ РАЗРОЗНЕННОГО ОБЩЕСТВА XX ВЕКА В РОМАНЕ У. ФОЛКНЕРА «КОГДА Я УМИРАЛА»

##### ХУССАМ АССААД

*Роман У. Фолкнера «Когда я умираю» мастерски изображает человеческую разобщенность в настроениях, мыслях и делах. В этом произведении автор разрабатывает и развивает различные проблемные вопросы экзистенциализма (парадокс, отчуждение, непонимание), чрезвычайно важные для XX века. Фолкнер использует технику потока сознания, внутренний монолог, множественность точек зрения, чтобы нарисовать картину апатии и упадка нескольких поколений, принадлежащих к поликультурному обществу Юга США. Действие принимает форму «путешествия к мертвым» – как в фактическом плане, так и в воображении героев романа.*

**Ключевые слова:** экзистенциализм, парадокс, отчуждение, непонимание, поток сознания, внутренний монолог, Юг США.